



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council Committee of the Whole

45 Fort Hill Road  
Groton, CT 06340-4394  
Town Clerk (860)441-6640  
Town Manager  
(860)441-6630

**Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Heather Sherman Bond, Kathryn M. Brown-Tracy, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, Paulann H. Sheets, and James L. Streeter**

**Tuesday, January 27, 2009**

**6:00 PM**

**Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1**

#### **SPECIAL MEETING**

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

*Mayor Watson called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.*

#### **2. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bond, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnayan.*

*City Council: Mayor Dennis Popp and Councilor David Hale*

*Groton Long Point: Bob Congdon, Rich Moravsik, Tom Sullivan, and Fred Berggren*

#### **3. Calendar and Communications**

*None.*

#### **4. Approval of Minutes**

##### **2009-0028 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)**

##### **RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole meeting of January 13, 2009 are hereby accepted and approved.

**A motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Bond, to adopt.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

#### **5. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **Issues to Discuss with the City Council:**

##### **2009-0011 Joint Meeting with City of Groton (2009 Standing Referral)**

##### **Discussed**

*(See 1/27/09 Committee of the Whole discussion under 2008-0243 Reuse of Colonel Ledyard School; 2008-0260 Integrated Pavement Management Program; and 2009-0019 FYE 2010 Budget.)*

##### **2008-0243 Reuse of Colonel Ledyard School**

##### **Recommended for a Resolution**

*The Town Manager noted that the Council recently received a report on Board of Education storage needs indicating that money will be needed to either build a facility or retrofit a school. The Council directed the Town Manager to have the vacant school properties appraised. Once the appraisals are completed, there would have to be a discussion of how best to value the Colonel Ledyard School property considering potential demolition costs and contributions that the City has made through taxes. There is also a possibility of leasing the property rather than selling it.*

*Mayor Popp indicated that he is looking for a time frame. The City has space needs that will either be addressed by eliminating the auditorium at the Municipal Building or using the Colonel Ledyard School.*

*The Town Manager suggested that the two Councils discuss how the property will be used. There is no identified Town use for the property, and as it sits vacant, the building is deteriorating.*

*Councilor Bond asked the City to put a proposal in writing regarding how the building will be used and whether the City wants to purchase or lease the property. Mayor Popp stated that it does not matter if the property is purchased or leased. With respect to uses, one option is to move the police department there. There is also a need for public meeting space and the gymnasium could be used for recreation programs. The City needs a commitment from the Town about whether the property will be leased or sold to the City, or put on the market. The City is prepared to use the facility immediately.*

*Councilor Streeter asked the Town Manager to make the appraisal for this property a top priority so that this issue can be resolved in about a month. He added that he would hate to lose the auditorium space at the Municipal Building.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Brown-Tracy, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, to take Colonel Ledyard School out of consideration as a storage facility, appraise the property, and proceed with negotiations to transfer the property (lease or sale) to the City of Groton.**

**Councilor Bond thinks the building should be leased and therefore there is no need to wait for the appraisal. Councilor Sheets feels the value should be ascertained whether the property is leased or sold. The Town Manager suggested that the resolution include a referral to the Planning Commission under CGS 8-24. The Council concurred.**

**A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Streeter, to amend the original motion to not do an appraisal.**

**Councilor Sheets feels it is bad policy to not obtain an appraisal of the property. The Town Manager stated he is envisioning retaining the land and leasing the building for \$1 a year. Negotiations with the City would involve potential uses, length of the lease, etc. If the Council is considering negotiating a price for the lease, then an appraisal should be done by both parties.**

**A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, to amend the motion to do the appraisal, and move forward with negotiations to lease the property to the City for \$1 per year.**

**Councilor O'Beirne sees no need for an appraisal if the Council is committed to leasing the property to the City for \$1. The Town Manager noted that the lease will still have to go to the RTM and there may be a requirement for a public hearing.**

**The second motion to amend carried unanimously.**

**The first motion to amend and second were withdrawn.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2008-0260**

**Integrated Pavement Management Program**

**Discussed**

*The Town Manager explained that the Town has agreed to present as unified a community-wide paving plan as possible in the CIP. The integrated Pavement Condition Index (PCI) list still requires some judgment by staff. It is too early in the budget process to tell how much paving will be proposed for next year. There will not be enough money to fund the program in accordance with the recommendations in the Pavement Management Report.*

*Bob Congdon, President of the Groton Long Point Association, introduced Rich Moravsik, Tom*

*Sullivan, and Fred Berggren.*

*Mr. Moravsik stated he reviewed the MacTech Pavement Management Report and Groton Long Point is moving forward with the recommendations. The Town Manager noted that studies were done for all three entities and the Council has discussed approaching pavement management from a community-wide standpoint. Projects were prioritized and now staff must evaluate the projects to see where the most good can be done with the available dollars. The Town Manager distributed the prioritized list. He noted that last year, funding for paving appeared in both the operating budget and the CIP. Since the Town is no longer hiring outside contractors to do paving work, all dollars will appear in the CIP for FYE 2010.*

*Councilor Bond asked to see Groton Long Point's paving costs and Mr. Moravsik stated he would provide them. Mr. Moravsik noted that, according to an engineer's study, the actual costs are almost double the costs estimated in the report. The Town Manager noted that all three entities are underfunding their pavement management plans. The value of the plan is in the relativity of the numbers, not the actual numbers. Mr. Moravsik asked if the plan would be updated based on the work done by Groton Long Point and Director of Public Works, Gary Schneider, stated no because it is too labor intensive. The Town Manager suggested that the three entities evaluate what their needs are and then work within the recommendations of the report.*

**2009-0019**

**FYE 2010 Budget**

**Discussed**

*The Town Manager explained that he has asked department heads to provide him with level service budgets, and then alternate scenarios for 2% increase, 0% increase, 3% reduction, and 5% reduction. These scenarios will help the Town Manager prepare the budget that he will submit to the Council. The Town Manager suggested that perhaps the City and Groton Long Point could be asked to do the same thing. Mr. Congdon noted that his budget submittal is a 0% increase and he is also developing a 5% decrease scenario.*

*Discussion followed on some of the issues raised at a budget roundtable discussion attended by Mayor Watson earlier in the day, and on the "shovel-ready" projects presented to SCCOG.*

**2006-0100**

**Thames Street Rehabilitation Study**

**Not Discussed**

**Issues to Discuss with Groton Long Point:**

**2009-0029**

**Joint Meeting with Groton Long Point Board of Directors (2009 Standing Referral)**

**Discussed**

*(See 1/27/09 Committee of the Whole discussion under 2008-0260 Integrated Pavement Management Program and 2009-0019 FYE 2010 Budget.)*

*- Other*

*Mr. Moravsik noted that he has had a number of meetings with the Town Manager regarding the Beach Road Bridge repair/replacement project. Mr. Moravsik gave a brief history of the bridge, the assessments that have been done, and cost estimates to repair/replace the bridge. Groton Long Point will be looking for additional engineering dollars in FYE 2010. They do not need additional funds for design.*

*With respect to police funding, the Town Manager noted that conducting a community-wide police study has been discussed in the past, but without any success. Mr. Congdon stated that he believes such a study is a great idea. Mr. Congdon then addressed some of the concerns that Councilors raised with him regarding the presence of a Groton Long Point Association patrol car at entrance to Groton Long Point and other practices of the department.*

*The Committee of the Whole recessed at 7:30 p.m. for ten minutes.*

**Continuation of Committee of the Whole Meeting:**

**2009-0014      FYE 2008 CAFR**

**Discussed**

*Director of Finance Sal Pandolfo explained that an annual audit is required by the Town Charter, and state statutes require that financial statements be published each year by December 31st. The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) is a communication and informational document that is also used by bond rating agencies, investors, and creditors when the Town seeks bonding.*

*The report consists of three sections: Introductory; Financial; and Statistical. It is accompanied by a management letter, which raises IT security issues that are being addressed.*

*Vanessa Rossito of Blum Shapiro reviewed the document section by section, and answered questions posed by Councilors. Councilor Bond asked if the Board of Education will be asked to respond to the concerns raised about its practices.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Sheets, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2009-0021      Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut Grant - Mystic & Noank Library**

**Discussed**

*Town Manager Oefinger explained that this request, and referral 2009-0022, are for authorization for the Town Manager to provide an affidavit stating that these grants will not result in a reduction of Town funding for the Mystic & Noank Library or the Bill Memorial Library. The Town Manager described the proposed activities associated with each grant.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2009-0022      Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut Grant - Bill Memorial Library**

**Discussed**

*(See 1/27/09 Committee of the Whole discussion under #2009-0021 Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut Grant - Mystic & Noank Library.)*

**A motion was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2008-0121      Condition of Chipperini Property on Library Street**

**A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Sheets, to enter executive session at 8:05 p.m. to discuss the condition of the Chipperini Property on Library Street and pending litigation, and to invite the Town Manager and Town Attorneys to attend.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

*The executive session concluded at 8:36 p.m.*

**2009-0030      Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update**

**Discussed**

*Director of Parks and Recreation John Silsby noted that his department has been working with a consulting firm to update the 20-year-old Parks and Recreation Master Plan. There were a number of stakeholder meetings held and a survey was distributed to 2500 residents; 358 responses were received. An analysis of those responses will be presented in February.*

Councilor O'Beirne heard a number of concerns from residents that the tenor of the survey was to build new facilities and increase programs. He questioned the cost of the survey. Mr. Silsby noted that the entire update project cost is \$75,000, which was budgeted a couple of years ago. Parks and Recreation needs the support of a Master Plan to seek grants. The survey covered many topics and shows that people are willing to spend money on public recreation opportunities. Mr. Silsby noted that approximately 60 pages of preliminary information are currently being analyzed.

Councilor Streeter received the survey. At a time when the Council has been discussing areas that can be cut, his impression was that the survey was focused on increases. He suggested that the timing of the report, given the economic times, is not good. If the report recommends additional expenditures, Councilor Streeter will recommend that it be tabled. Mr. Silsby agreed that the recommendations do not have to be addressed immediately. He added that during an economic downturn, more people spend money on hometown opportunities rather than vacations, and participation in programs actually increases.

Councilor Sheets received objections to Question #9 regarding possible locations for a community center and she does not feel that it was a good idea to include a facilities issue in the survey.

Councilor Bond suggested that the survey could have been included as part of Discover to save money.

Councilor O'Beirne expressed concern with the "wish list" in Question #7. Mr. Silsby noted that the survey questions were an outcome of the meetings with the community as well as staff suggestions.

**2008-0281****Authorization of Agencies, Authorities, Boards, Commissions and Committees****Recommended for a Resolution**

Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox distributed new Registers and Town Charters.

With respect to the Guidebook to Boards and Commissions, the Town Clerk hopes to publish an addendum in the future that lists regional and temporary committees.

Discussion followed on the title of the guidebook and other suggestions made by the Personnel Committee.

A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution and that the title "Guidebook to the Agencies, Authorities, Boards, Commissions, Committees and Councils including the Authorized ABCs" be used.

The motion carried unanimously

**2009-0019****FYE 2010 Budget****Discussed**

- Discussion with Director of Parks and Recreation and Town Clerk

Director of Parks and Recreation John Silsby distributed talking points. He provided an overview of the following funds and what they support: General Fund, Revenues, Golf Course Fund, Special Revenue Fund, and Donations/Sponsorships.

A level service budget represents a 2.68% increase. Increases are associated with personnel, the fleet fund, equipment, and an extra week of the playground program, and are offset somewhat by projected increases in revenue.

It was noted that under the following scenarios, the impacts are cumulative.

*2% increase - All equipment would be eliminated.*

*0% increase - Eight programs would be moved to the Special Revenue Fund.*

*3% decrease - A part-time Food Operator and Senior Fitness Program would be moved to the Special Revenue Fund; the Meals on Wheels allowance would be reduced; the fireworks concert and the parks monitor program would be eliminated; the playground program would be reduced by one week; inter-playground bussing and the intern program would be eliminated; training, temporary personnel and supplies would be reduced.*

*5% decrease - The July 4th parade would be eliminated; Mystic Education Center rental expense would be moved to the Special Revenue Fund or a full time office assistant position would be eliminated.*

*In the golf course budget, a level service budget is less than last year since revenues are projected to exceed costs.*

*3% and 5% decreases would reduce temporary employees, overtime for weekend care, water for irrigation, supplies for turf care, repair parts, training and marketing.*

*Mr. Silsby noted that any impact on the quality of the golf course will reduce play and negatively impact revenue.*

*Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox stated her requested budget is level service and zero dollar increase. This is primarily due to a reduction in overtime for the election (municipal election in 2009 versus a national election in 2008) and overtime and advertising associated with the Charter Revision Commission, which has completed its work.*

*3% reduction - This would involve cuts in professional development; elimination of printing and postage for explanatory texts; and additional overtime and materials reductions.*

*5% reduction - This scenario would affect personnel and could result in possible office closings; reduction in funds for Citizenship Day; and no replacement of copiers.*

**2009-0015      Town Clerk Compensation**

**Not Discussed**

**2008-0168      Town Manager Annual Evaluation**

**Not Discussed**

**6.      Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List**

*None.*

**7.      ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Bond, to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*